NEWS RELEASE

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INCREASES FUNDING TO SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRES
Supporting Delivery Of Victim Services Across Ontario

TORONTO – The McGuinty government will boost funding for sexual assault centres to support the delivery of services to victims, Attorney General Michael Bryant and Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, said today.

"Victims of sexual assault need high quality, community-based services to help them overcome their trauma," said Bryant. "This additional funding will help these centres to meet increased operational costs so they can assist clients at a critical time in their lives."

"With this investment we are building on our efforts to improve supports for victims of sexual assault," said Pupatello. "The McGuinty government takes the issue of sexual assault and all other forms of violence against women very seriously. That is why we are spending more than $190 million annually on services to address violence against women."

"We are pleased that this funding will help us to meet the rising cost of providing vital services to our clients," said Marilyn Oladimeji, President, Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres. "Ontario's rape crisis centres have evolved continually to meet the changing needs of women and our services have grown from crisis line support in a few locations to our current broad range of services, including 24-hour crisis/support lines."

The government invests $13 million per year in 38 sexual assault centres across the province. Today's announcement represents a three per cent increase.

Provincially funded sexual assault centres in Ontario serve more than 36,000 women each year, offering support, assistance and compassion. The broad range of confidential services offered free of charge includes:

- 24-hour crisis and support lines that provide information and emotional support, counselling on available services and referrals to appropriate community agencies for women who have experienced sexual assault
- Accompanying victims to hospital, to meetings with police and to Court
- Supportive peer counselling services, both one-on-one and group sessions, to help victims recover from trauma
- One-on-one information and referral services for victims
- Public and professional education regarding the nature and extent of sexual violence.

The McGuinty government and Ontarians are working together to achieve results in supporting victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and other crimes of violence. Further initiatives include:

- Providing $4.9 million for a public education campaign to promote healthy, equal relationships and change attitudes that perpetuate violence against women
- Expanding the Child Victim/Witness Centre program to all regions of the province to provide support services

and court preparation for children, many of whom have been sexually abused or exposed to domestic violence

- Investing more than $15 million over the past three years in the Community Grant Program, including $6 million in 2007-08, in more than 200 locally based, innovative projects that enhance services for victims of crime across Ontario
- Implementing a comprehensive, five-part, $5 million strategy to address Internet child pornography and offer support to victims and referrals to community services.

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Contacts:
Greg Crone, Ministry of the Attorney General, Minister's Office, (416) 326-1785
Brendan Crawley, Ministry of the Attorney General, Communications Branch, (416) 326-2210

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